THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA – GLOSSARY

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THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: A	
Title	**Description**
absurdism / Absurd, Theater of the	phrase first coined in 1961 by theater critic Martin Esslin to describe theater set in a world without God, reason, or meaning—a world through which characters are left to stumble aimlessly. Absurdist plays transcend traditions of realism and frequently combine elements from theatrical movements such as expressionism, surrealism, and symbolism to create a tone or sense of atmospherethat conveys the irrational world of the play. Representative writers of the genre include: samuel beckett, eugène ionesco, jean genet, edward albee, and harold pinter. alfred jarry's *ubu roi* is a precursor to the Theater of the Absurd.
act	traditional segmentation of a play that indicates a change in time, action, or location, and helps organize a play's dramatic structure. Plays may be composed of acts that, in turn, are composed of scenes. The Romans were the first to divide plays into acts, although the Greeks before them broke up dramas with choral interludes. Various theatrical movements emphasized the importance of including a specified number of acts. shakespeare's plays were divided into five acts when they were published and thereafter the five-act structure became the model for playwrights through the end of the nineteenth century. Modern dramatists began to break the tradition at the turn of the twentieth century; contemporary plays are often divided into two acts.
acting	the portrayal of a character's words and actions by an actor. Acting requires actors to embody the personality, characteristics, and motivations of a character or individual they are portraying. A psychological or internal approach to acting asks actors to rely on personal experience and emotive response, whereas an external or physical approach asks the actor to work from the outside in, creating a physical exterior as a means of exploring the interior motivation or objective for the character.
action	the physical activity or accomplishment of a character's intentions. Actions are not the events in a plot but rather the force that pushes the plot along. One character's action inevitably leads to another action, which together form part of a play's overall action. Aristotle describes tragedy as "an imitation of an action," meaning that a character's choices are not simply narrated but acted out onstage.
actor	an individual who portrays a character in a play or theatrical entertainment. Actors in a drama represent characters through

	imitation, interpretation of dialogue, and interaction with other persons on the stage. The Greek playwright Thespis is credited as the first actor (and from his name we have the word *thespian* for actor) because he was the first playwright to incorporate lines of dialogue in his work.
aestheticism	term applied in nineteenth-century Europe and America to the movement that advocated the creation of "art for art's sake," (a slogan coined by the philosopher Victor Cousin). Influenced by the German Romantics such as johann wolfgang von goethe, a wide range of writers and artists adopted the philosophy because it advocated the primacy of beauty over values such as political utility, thus giving them a sense of purpose. The movement is associated with writers such as oscar wilde.
agon	an ancient Greek term used to denote the fundamental conflict in any drama. *Agon* also is the term used for a theatrical convention typically associated with Old Comedy where the chorus is divided into two halves to debate an important idea or political question that relates to the major themesof the play. In aristophanes' *lysistrata*, for example, the chorus is composed of a group of old men and a group of old women. The *agon* in this case provides comic fuel in the battle of the sexes.
alienation effect	*see* estrangement effect.
allegory	extended metaphor in which characters, objects, and actions represent abstract concepts or principles in a narrative that conveys a moral lesson. Allegorical plays were especially popular in medieval England. In everyman, for example, the title character is intended to represent humanity itself as he negotiates the temporal state of existence.
amphitheater	A classical Greek theater usually built into a hillside with a semicircular playing space called an *orchestra* surrounded by a semicircle of tiered seats. *Amphitheater* can also refer to a modern theatrical space with a similar design.
anachronism	term used to describe anything incongruous with its historical context—for instance, the presence of a telephone in medieval England. Dramatists often use anachronisms in an intentional blending of worlds, sometimes to achieve a comic effect. An unintentional anachronistic gesture or expression, however, such as the use of modern slang in historical drama, can prove distracting to spectators.
anagnorisis	the moment of recognition, or enlightenment, that is realized when a character discovers the true relation of himself or herself to the incidents in the plot and to the other characters within it. This term was first described by Aristotle in his *Poetics*.
antagonist	the person or force that opposes the protagonist or main character in a drama or narrative. The term derives from the Greek, meaning

	"opponent" or "rival."
antihero	a protagonist or central character who lacks the qualities typically associated with heroism—for example, bravery, morality, or good looks—but still manages to earn sympathy from the spectator.
anti-masque	a form of theatrical entertainment introduced by ben jonson in 1608 intended to contrast the beauty and style of the court masque with stories that included grotesque or silly characters and dances. Often, masques and anti-masques would be performed together to demonstrate the scenic designer's ability to juxtapose elegance with ugliness.
apron	the area of a stage that stretches out past the primary playing space or proscenium arch. The apron can be used to cover the orchestra pit in a traditional proscenium theater.
arena	a theater with seating that surrounds the playing area on all sides—sometimes referred to as "theater in the round"—to create a more intimate experience for the audience. Stage configurations for arena theaters can include circular, oval, or rectangular playing areas.
aside	a theatrical convention (commonly used in drama prior to the nineteenth century but less often afterwards) in which a character, unnoticed by the other characters on stage, speaks frankly and directly to the audience to express a thought.
Atellan farce	a form of comic burlesque from Atella, a Southern town in Italy, that was performed at Roman festivals during the third through first century b.c.e. The art form is considered a precursor to *commedia dell'arte*, both of which relied heavily on improvisation by a small set of stock characters such as the fool, the braggart, and the comic old man.
auto sacramentale	a form of religious drama presented in Spain during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, similar to the morality or cycle plays of England. The plays were performed outdoors on *carros*, or wagons, as part of the Feast of Corpus Christi, a lengthy celebration intended to honor the redemptive power of Jesus Christ. The plays were enormously popular and commanded the attention of Spain's leading dramatists.
avant-garde	originally a military term meaning "advance guard" (French), the term was increasingly used to describe unusual and therefore advanced forms of art and theater. The concept of avant-garde art can be applied to numerous theatrical movements aligned in their rejection of social institutions and established artistic conventions, though it is also used to describe artistic experimentation in the interest of pushing the art form forward. Symbolism, futurism, expressionism, Dadaism, and surrealism are all examples of avant-garde movements.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: B	
Title	**Description**
bhavas	in sanskrit drama, the eight fundamental human emotions (pleasure, mirth, sorrow, wrath, vigor, fear, disgust, and wonder) that are paired with *rasas*, the aesthetic experiences of the spectator or the mood of the scene in question. The various combinations of these elements create a diversity of moods and experiences that enhance the viewers' sensations when watching a play.
Black Arts Movement	cultural movement in the United States during the 1960s that sought to alter the mainstream theatrical climate by cultivating works written for and about African Americans. A number of organizations spearheaded the movement including Amiri Baraka's (b. 1934) Black Arts Repertoire Theatre, the New Lafayette Theatre, and the Negro Ensemble Company.
blackface	cosmetic technique, common in nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century minstrel shows and vaudeville performances, by which a performer paints his or her face with dark makeup to portray an African American. Extremely popular with audiences at the time, the practice is now considered deeply offensive because it propagates stereotyped caricatures of race. In contemporary theater, the practice has occasionally been appropriated by African American playwrights and directors to call attention to issues of race.
blank verse	the verse form most like everyday speech; in English, unrhymed iambic pentameter. In the sixteenth century blank verse became the standard form for dramatic and epic poetry. Most of shakespeare's plays are in blank verse.
blocking	the specific movement or positioning of actors onstage intended to enhance the theatrical experience for the spectator, whether that be the realistic portrayal of a domestic conflict or an abstract idea. Blocking can also set the tone of a play or convey ideas not intrinsic to the dialogue or script. Typically, the director determines the blocking in a play.
bugaku	a Japanese form of mask play first imported from China and India in the seventh century that later included dances from Korea, Tibet, and Vietnam. Performances were restricted to the royal court and the form relied on strict tradition and technique. The subjects of these plays were taken from religious texts. *Bugaku* is still performed today on important state occasions.
bunraku	an elaborate form of Japanese puppet (or doll) theater that evolved from earlier puppet and storytelling traditions in the eleventh century and is still performed today. The dramas are three acts long and explore historical or domestic themes. The puppets onstage are generally two-thirds the size of the persons manipulating them and the puppeteers are visible to the spectators. The chief operator wears a

	kimono, while the other participants wear black. The narrative (or *joruri*) is delivered by a speaker who stands to the right of the stage and the action is underscored by the music of a *samisen* (a banjolike instrument). The best known playwright of the genre is Chikamatsu Monzaemon (1653–1725).
burlesque	a form of performance that aims to mimic and distort its subject matter for comic purpose rather than invective criticism. *The Beggar's Opera* by John Gay (1685–1732), for example, mimics and pokes fun at the seriousness of traditional opera. In late-nineteenth-century America, burlesques incorporating music and elements of fantasy became a popular medium for vaudeville or variety shows featuring bawdy sexual humor.
THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: C	
Title	**Description**
carros	wagons used as stages for *auto sacramentales*,performances that celebrated the Feast of corpus Christi in Spain.
casting	the process of deciding which actors are to play which parts. Casting is an important factor in the establishment of character on stage.
catharsis (*katharis*)	the emotional release or sense of relief a spectator may feel at the end of a tragedy. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle posits that the proper aim of tragedy is to arouse feelings of pity and fear and effectively rid the body of these feelings. *Katharsis* is the term he uses to describe this purging of emotions.
character	a player or personality integral to the telling of a story. In drama, actors must demonstrate character through *mimesis* or imitation rather than narration. (*See* stock character.)
choregos	in fifth-century Greek theater practice, the producer appointed to a playwright by an *archon* (government leader) who underwrote the cost of training and costuming the chorus and musicians.
chorus	in Greek drama, a group of singers and dancers who often provide exposition and commentary on the action in the play.
City Dionysia	One of the four civic festivals held in ancient Greece each year in honor of the god dionysus that are chiefly associated with the presentation of theatrical work. In the fifth century b.c.e., the festival incorporated tragedies, satyr plays, dithyrambic contests, choruses, and later in the century, comedies. Playwrights competed in the City Dionysia for prestige and prizes awarded by the state.
classical unities	*see* unities.
climax	in the language of traditional dramatic theory, the point in a drama's plot that is preceded by the rising action and followed by the falling action. It is sometimes also the moment of greatest crisis for the protagonist and/or other characters. (*See* plot.)
closet dramas	plays initially meant to be performed or recited at small gatherings or read in private. During the first century b.c.e., when the Roman public

	lost interest in traditional comedies and tragedies, many dramatists, including seneca, were forced to abandon staged drama and instead wrote closet dramas for recitation at public banquets and other social events. goethe's *faust* and büchner's *woyzeck* are later examples of closet dramas.
comedia nueva	literally, "new drama" (Spanish). The most popular dramatic form written during the Golden Age of Spain. In structure, the plays were comprised of three acts in varying verse form that mixed both tragic and comic elements. Plots were drawn from history, mythology, legend, Italian *novelle* and other literary sources, the Bible, popular ballads, and the everyday life of country and town. Specialized subgenres included: the *comedias de capa y espada* ("cape and sword plays"), which featured stories of romance and intrigue, and *comedias de costumbres* ("comedies of manners"). lope de vega carpio is one of the primary contributers to this form.
Comedie Française	the world's first national theater, established by the French monarchy. Formed by the merger of Paris's two acting companies, the company began performing in 1680 and became a dominant presence in the French theatrical industry.
comedy	from the Greek word *komos* meaning "band of revelers," comedy is a form of drama that is distinguished by humorous content and endings that are, on balance, "happy" ones. The first comic performances were entertainments associated with Greek fertility rights that later took the form of satyr plays. Traditional comedic structure and form can be attributed to the work of aristophanes,who incorporated bawdy jokes and songs into far-fetched scenarios with fantastical or farcical situations. The conventions of comedy vary from place to place and from one era to another, depending on the sense of humor or sensibility of the age in which it is written. Some comedies rely heavily on sharp, witty dialogue (sheridan's *school for scandal*, for example), others on bodily humor and physical clowning (atellan farce or *commedia dell'arte*), and still others on a blending of these conventions (shakespeare's comedies). No matter what theatrical conventions they employ, most comedies attempt to highlight absurdities of their society's norms and values.
commedia dell'arte	literally "comedy of professional players" (Italian). A genre of Italian theater that emerged at the end of the sixteenth century. Performance relied on the portrayal of stock characters—some of which were derived from Roman comic types—and the improvisation of action and dialogue from a basic plot outline. There are two categories of *commedia* characters: unmasked and masked. The unmasked roles include the young lovers (the young man described as the *innamorato* and the young woman described as the *innamorata*). The many masked roles can usually be divided into masters and servants. The

	masters include: the *Capitano*, a braggart soldier whose romantic and military exploits are often discredited, *Pantalone*, a middle-aged or elderly merchant fond of courting young women, and *Dottore*, a pedantic show-off who often played Pantalone's friend or rival. The servant characters are typically described as *zanni*. The most popular include: *Arlecchino* or *Harlequin*, *Brighella*, and *Pulcinello*.
comedy of character	a form of Italian comedy, conceived by carlo goldoni in the eighteenth century, that contradicted the popular conventions of *commedia dell'arte* and sought to embrace a more literary drama. Goldoni's comedies of character often revolve around a single protagonist and are noted for their realistic dialogue, plausible plots, and moralistic tone.
comedy of manners	a form of comedy that satirizes the foibles of the upper class and aristocracy by means of witty dialogue and the ridicule of social decorum. The form originated in the seventeenth century in works by molière and arrived in England during the Restoration in the works of william wycherley, William Congreve (1670–1729), and others. In the late nineteenth century the form once again gained popularity in such comedies as oscar wilde's *the importance of being earnest*.
conflict	the central problem in the plot, the obstacle hindering a character from getting what he or she wants. Often, the diverging interests of the protagonist and antagonist create conflict.
context	the circumstantial or dramatic situation given to characters in a play by the playwright that can (and often does) affect the development and outcome of the drama and the decisions made by the characters.
coralles	the public theaters of Spain's Golden Age, similar to the open-air theaters of Elizabethan England. *Corrales* were constructed within square or rectangular courtyards. A raised stage with a permanent backdrop and upper levels was placed on one end of the courtyard with an open space, or *patio*, for standing spectators directly in front of it. On either side of the *patio* a section of ascending rows of seats known as the *gradas* extended to the second story. Above the *alojería* (or refreshment booth) at the end of the courtyard facing the stage, galleries accommodated additional spectators. Windows of buildings above the *grada*s served as box seats (*aposentos*), and additional levels of boxed seats or open galleries were available at the third- and fourth-floor levels.
Corpus Christi	a monthlong festival conceived by Pope Urban IV in 1264 to celebrate the redemptive power of the Holy Eucharist. The Corpus Christi cycle play was commissioned as a theatrical tribute to the events preceding Christ's birth as well as his life and resurrection. The church worked with secular groups in the presentation of the drama. The Latin of liturgical drama was abandoned in favor of vernacular dialogue that was spoken rather than chanted and thus could be readily understood

	by the audience.
Crisis	*see* climax.
Cruelty, Theater of	term introduced in 1932 by French theorist and playwright Antonin Artaud (1896–1948) to describe his vision of theater that sought to unleash the desires of the soul and thereby to repudiate the conventionalized lifelessness of Western art and society. His purpose was to shock his audiences into recognition and to appeal to their primitive impulses.
cuckold	term used to characterize a married man whose wife has been unfaithful to him. A cuckold is often portrayed as wearing horns as an attribute of his condition.
cycle plays	also called *mystery cycles*, a form of medieval drama that coincided with the feast of corpus Christi, a lengthy celebration intended to honor the redemptive power of Christ. Cycle plays were performed in the vernacular and composed of short plays presented throughout a day (or over the course of several days) that chronicled the religious history of humanity from the Creation through the Last Judgment. Most Corpus Christi plays were performed outdoors by secular groups sponsored by the guilds of varying professions. *the second shepherds' play* is an example of a cycle play.
cyclic plot	a plot in which the play ends in much the same way it began, rendering the action of the play futile for the characters involved. samuel beckett's *Waiting for Godot* has a cyclic plot.
THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: D	
Title	**Description**
Dadaism	a literary and artistic movement introduced by Tristan Tzara (1896–1963) in 1916 as a reaction to World War I. The principle motivation of the Dadaists was to illustrate the absurdity and chaos of the war by negating the traditional conventions of art. Performances therefore revered chaotic theory and incorporated discordant elements to showcase the inherent madness of human motivation. Their performances, or "manifestations," took place at a number of performance venues, including the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich. Dadaism was eventually absorbed into surrealism.
decorum	the proper way that characters should act onstage as dictated by their disposition and social standing. This concept was central to neoclassicism, which flourished in continental Europe in the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
dénouement	in a play, the point in which the loose ends of a plot are tied up, though the dramatic conflict may not be entirely resolved.
deus ex machina	literally, "a god emerging from a machine" (Latin). The *mechane* or crane used for special effects in fifth-century Greek performance would suspend an actor in midair and propel him over the playing space. Dramatists, especially euripides, often utilized the device to

	introduce a god who would appear at the end of the play and resolve the plot. In *the bacchae*, Dionysus emerges in the final moments to punish those who do not recognize his divinity. The term is used in contemporary criticism to describe a quick and contrived resolution to a play.
dialogue	language spoken by characters on stage. Dialogue differs from narration because it is delivered in the first person and seeks to imitate human interaction or convey the artistic purpose of the playwright. Dialogue does not necessarily need to be grounded in realism but must be consistent with the world of the play.
diction	the choice in language or words made by a playwright or performer in a drama to achieve a specific effect or style. *Diction* can also refer to a performer's manner of speech or rhetoric, sometimes used for character development.
Dionysus	god of wine, revelry, and fertility; son of Zeus, supreme god of ancient Greece, and Semele, a mortal woman. The origins of Greek drama are attributed to the celebrations in his honor at civic festivals called the city Dionysia.
director	in contemporary theater, the individual responsible for the theatrical concept of the play and its staging. In addition to casting actors, blocking the performers onstage, and running rehearsals, the director must coordinate the contributions of the whole artistic team. Directing, as a profession, has only been acknowledged in the last few centuries, but throughout history drama has relied on individuals serving in a directorial role.
dithyramb	a choral ode performed in honor of the god Dionysus, composed of an improvised story by a *koryphaios* (chorus leader) and a traditional refrain sung and danced by a chorus. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle suggests that tragedy emerged from the dithyramb. Arion of Lesbos (about 620 b.c.e.), often referred to as the father of dithyrambic poetry, is credited for transforming the art into a literary form and is considered the first to keep a written record of his work.
documentary theater	also referred to as "theater of fact," a form of theater that dramatizes political events (often quite recent) to explore issues of social and moral concern. Primary source material such as transcriptions of judicial proceedings, speeches, essays, newspaper articles, films, and photos are often incorporated directly into the theatrical script. Rolf Hochhuth (b. 1931) and Peter Weiss (1916–1982) were both early proponents of this form in Europe. In the United States, Emily Mann (b. 1952) and Moisés Kaufman (b. 1963) have also used the form.
domestic tragedy	a form of drama, popularized at the start of the eighteenth century in England, that deals with the fortunes of middle-class or mercantile characters rather than the upper class or aristocracy, which had been the traditional focus of tragedy. george lillo's *the london merchant*,

	which deals with the moral downfall of a London apprentice,is an example of domestic tragedy.
downstage	the area on stage closest to the audience. (*See* upstage.)
dramatic irony	a plot device in which a character holds a position or has an expectation that is reversed or fulfilled in a way that the character did not expect but that we, as audience members or readers, have anticipated because our knowledge of events or individuals is more complete than the character's.
dramatic structure	a textual organization based on a series of scenes, each of which is presented vividly and in detail.
dramatis personae	literally, "people in the drama" (Latin). A character list identifying important characters and their relationships, intended to help the reader or spectator understand the actions and interactions occurring onstage. In programs or playbills given to playgoers, this list often includes the names of the actors portraying the characters.
dramatist	a playwright, someone who writes dramatic literature.
dramaturg	a theatrical professional involved in a number of activities, including the development and revival of plays. Dramaturgs are trained in dramatic theory, theater practice, and the history of drama, equipping them to serve in a number of artistic capacities. As such, production dramaturgs may serve as partner to the director, as a sounding board for ideas, an extra set of eyes in the rehearsal room, and as a researcher. Many dramaturgs also serve as critics for journals and newspapers or work as literary managers in regional theaters. In opera as well as theater, dramaturgs may serve as a translator of texts or author of subtitles. The German playwright Gotthold Lessing (1729–1781) is often credited as being the first dramaturg.
dramaturgy	the art of playwriting, or the composition of a theatrical text or narrative; the mechanisms of storytelling, specifically how the structure and style of a play can inform the themes, motifs, and intent of the playwright. Dramaturgy encapsulates the building blocks of dramatic writing. Aristotle's *Poetics* is the preeminent classical examination of the constituent parts of a drama, a rhetorical investigation of the effectiveness of a play's dramaturgy.
drame bourgeois	a form of domestic tragedy, advocated by the French playwright and critic Denis Diderot (1713–1784), which explored social and familial problems of the middle class and departed from the restrictive tenets of neoclassicism. Diderot believed that "middle dramas" such as the *drame bourgeois* and comedies of virtue merited being produced in addition to traditional neoclassical comedies and tragedies.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: E	
Title	**Description**
ekkyklema	a rolling platform used in Greek performance to reveal the body of a character killed offstage.
Elizabethan drama	a work or body of works written in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603). Elizabethan plays often embody a sense of optimism and prosperity as England asserted itself as a European power. shakespeare wrote many of his plays during this period, which is why the Elizabethan age—and the age of her successor, James I (r. 1603–25), often referred to as the "Jacobean period"—is considered one of the greatest ages of dramatic innovation.
environmental theater	term coined by Richard Schechner (b. 1934) to describe a theatrical event in which the performance space is integral to the genesis of the performance and in a sense becomes a metaphor for the play itself. Also called "site-specific theater." The environment or atmosphere created by the space, whether found or transformed, should not only offer context in terms of setting but contribute to the production as a whole. The focus of the performance is intended to be flexible, in that audience members can literally see the work from a variety of viewpoints and in many instances they can participate.
epic	a long and involved narrative poem that depicts the adventures of a central figure of grand or heroic distinction. Typically, epics are split into episodes and chronicle a journey or plight of a hero. In ancient Greece, epic poems were often recited by *rhapsodes* (professional storytellers). Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are examples of epic poems.
Epic Theater	bertolt brecht's model theater intended to serve as an alternative to Aristotelian theater with its emphasis on continuous plot and right construction. The Epic Theater addresses human reason rather than feeling, thus discouraging passivity, so that the spectator leaves the theater with a sense that the current social order is alterable and that action is necessary. Political change takes precedent over aesthetic wonder. The term *estrangement effect* (*Verfremdungseffekt* in German) refers to an important technique employed by Epic Theater practitioners because it places responsibility on the audience. Onstage events are performed in an unexpected manner, thereby provoking responses of surprise or curiosity on the audience's part and prompting a desire to elicit change.
epeisodia	a sequence of episodes in a Greek tragedy in which the characters drive the action through interaction with the chorus and one another.
epilogue	a concluding address by an actor or group of actors that is directed toward the audience; also an additional scene, following the resolution of a play, intended to comment on the preceding events and offer a final perspective by the author or actors.
episodic plot	a plot that has one or more of the following characteristics: scenes or

	episodes that are organized in nonsequential order; shifts in time, location, or setting; or subplots that incorporate more than one set of characters. Plays with multiple characters and subplots are often episodic because the structure allows the focus to shift from one narrative to another. shakespeare's plays generally incorporate episodic plots.
epistle	a literary composition in the form of a letter. ben jonson included an epistle in the printed version of his play *volpone*.
estrangement effect	A phrase translated from the German word, *Verfremdungseffekt* (sometimes also translated as "alienation effect"), referring to an important tenet of bertolt brecht's Epic Theater that asks the audience to examine familiar, everyday events from a critical distance as if they were strange. Brecht describes his theories of estrangement as a rebuttal to the popular Aristotelian perspective that an audience derives pleasure from an empathic connection to the events performed on stage. Instead, he suggests that, in performance, an actor can alter his or her technique to illustrate ideas of broader historical or social proportions. The actor's self-awareness and awareness of the performative nature of storytelling distances the spectator from an immediate emotional response that, in turn, disrupts identification with the character and elicits instead a reaction of surprise or curiosity from an otherwise ordinary or contrived situation.
exodus	the concluding scene in a Greek tragedy where all of the characters and chorus members exit the stage.
exposition	information, often delivered near the beginning of a play, that reveals something essential for the audience's understanding of the world of the play or the story's given circumstances, as well as the basic relationships between characters or events that have taken place offstage. Exposition can provide pertinent information for all of the characters in the drama but can also be limited to a few. Sometimes the audience or reader will be given information unknown to the characters on stage (*see* dramatic irony).
expressionism	a literary and theatrical movement that originated in Europe just before the twentieth century but flourished from 1910–25. Spurred by the overwhelming social and political upheaval of World War I, expressionist dramatists strove to emphasize the moral crisis of the modern, industrial world dominated by machines and masses of people. In expressionist plays the characters are often nameless and defined solely by their occupations. Other stylistic elements include the use of primal gesture (exaggerated emotive movement), punctuated dialogue (language that emphasizes various words or expressions), and theatrical design that includes exaggerated or distorted images. Playwrights and directors demonstrate the mood of an expressionist drama by staging the play so that it reflects the

	emotional perspective of the protagonist or hero. Major expressionist playwrights include Ernst Toller (1893–1939) and Georg Kaiser (1878–1945). bertolt brecht, august strindberg, susaN glaspell, and eugene o'neill all experimented with expressionism during their careers as playwrights.
THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: F	
Title	**Description**
falling action	the portion of a play's structure, usually at or near the end, in which the complications of the rising action are untangled.
farce	a genre of fast-paced comedy characterized by rapid stage action, a series of misunderstandings, ludicrous characterizations, and physical humor. Farcical techniques were employed by Greek and Roman playwrights such as aristophanes and plautus, though the term *farce* itself was not used until the middle ages, when it came to refer to comic scenes inserted in church plays. The genre of farce flourished in medieval and Renaissance Europe, most notably in the comic improvisations of the *commedia dell'arte*. One of the most famous later writers of farce is the French playwright, Georges Feydeau (1862–1921).
Federal Theater Project	part of the Works Progress Administration enacted by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1935, the Federal Theater Project was a government program that created work for theater artists, writers, musicians, and arts practitioners during the Great Depression. The program was run by Hallie Flanagan (1890–1969), who had directed the Experimental Theatre at Vassar College. In the FTP, Flanagan created a forum for socially relevant theater, including the cultivation of new works and important revivals. Famous productions included Sinclair Lewis and John Moffitt's *It Can't Happen Here* and Orson Welles' *Macbeth*. The FTP was also associated with "living newspapers," multimedia theatrical productions that examined pressing social issues. The project ended in 1939 but laid the foundation for the regional theater movement in America.
flat characters	characters in a play, often but not always minor characters, who are relatively simple; who are presented as having few, though sometimes dominant, traits; and who thus do not change much in the course of a play. (*See* round characters.)
foil	originally, a layer of polished metal placed beneath a gem to accentuate its brilliance; when applied to drama, a character whose qualities or traits highlight those of another. In shakespeare's *hamlet*, for instance, Laertes serves as a foil to Hamlet because both are put in the position of avenging a murdered father.
folio	a form of publication to create books of the largest format, comprised of large sheets of paper folded in half to create two leaves (*folio* is Latin for "leaves"), or four pages. shakespeare's works were

	published posthumously in1623 in an edition now known as the First Folio. (*See* quarto.)
foreshadowing	any literary device that alludes to future occurrences in a story's plot. The use of symbolic imagery is commonly used to foreshadow events, as is the convention of narrative prophecy often employed by classical Greek dramatists.
fourth wall	theatrical term applied to the realist stage, where actors no longer played directly to the audience but instead focused on each other. In nineteenth-century England, the convention became increasingly popular and stage sets were designed to replicate a traditional room with three walls, the "fourth wall" (that is, the proscenium arch, or front of the stage) being open for observation of the action by the audience.
futurism	a theatrical movement conceived in 1909 by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876–1944) that sought to transform humanity by rejecting the past and embracing the age of the machine. A typical futurist technique is the use of brief, simultaneous skits that depart from traditional modes of character development and often involve direct interaction or even confrontation with audience members. Futurist performances also utilized technology to create multimedia effects.
THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: G H	
Title	**Description**
Gesamtkunstwerk	literally, "total work of art" (German), a term coined by Richard Wagner (1813-1883) in his essay *Art and Revolution* , which describes his interest in the integration of dramatic literature, music, theatrical performance, and visual elements such as set and lighting design into a new and complete synthesis.
gigaku	a form of Japanese theater introduced from China via Korea in the seventh and eighth centuries that can best be described as a Buddhist dance play. At the start of *gigaku* plays, masked figures moved in procession and then performed a number of comic scenes. Performances generally incorporated music and a number of stock characters.
Golden Age of Spain	a period of time during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that saw the expansion of Spanish global power, rivaling that of Elizabethan England, while Spanish dramatic arts and literature achieved new levels of excellence.
green room	the offstage location in the theater where actors wait before they appear onstage. (*See* wings.)
groundlings	an expression used during the English Elizabethan age to describe theater audience members who paid a penny to stand around the three sides of the stage in the area called the "yard."
guerilla theater	a form of theater popularized in the United States during the 1960s that sought to confront spectators with brief, unscheduled, and often

	provocative performances in public spaces. Performers were interested in breaking traditional social barriers in order to convey their political messages.
hamartia	the Greek term used by Aristotle to describe a character's intellectual error or mistaken assumption that prompts the tragic outcome of his or her actions. Often described as the "tragic flaw" or self-destructive force that triggers the downfall of a socially elevated figure.
Harlem Renaissance	a movement centered on Harlem, New York, during the 1920s and '30s, marked by a proliferation of artistic achievement by African Americans in literature and the arts. The work produced during this time explores and illuminates the black experience in America. langston hughes and Zora Neal Hurston (1891-1960) are two of the most famous writers associated with the period.
hero/heroine	the leading male/female character in a play, often larger than life, sometimes almost godlike. (*See* antihero , protagonist , and villain.)
high (verbal) comedy	humorous plays that employ subtlety, wit, or the representation of refined life. (*See* low (physical) comedy.)
history play	a play that deals with characters, events, and subjects taken from history. shakespeare wrote a number of plays about English history, including *Richard II* ; *Richard III* ; and *Henry IV* , Parts 1 and 2.
histriones	the Latin term for actor. In Roman theater, *histriones* were typically male, and could perform in both tragedies and comedies. Unlike Greek dramatists who often doubled as both playwright and performer, *histriones* were professional performers.
hubris	the tragic flaw of pride or arrogance that can lead a hero to disregard accepted moral codes or warnings from the gods, prompting his or her own downfall.
humors comedy	a genre of comedy popularized by ben jonson that drew upon the classical medical theory that an individual's temperament or psychological disposition was determined by the balance (or imbalance) or four bodily fluids (known as "humors"): black bile, phlegm, blood, and choler, or yellow bile. Characters in humors comedies are motivated by their predominant humors. A choleric (or easily angered) personality, for instance, was one reflecting a predominance of yellow bile.
hypokrites	the Greek word for actor; literally, "the answerer."
THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: I	
Title	**Description**
iambic pentameter	in English verse meter, ten-syllable lines with alternating unstressed and stressed syllables, the most common poetic meter in English and a particular favorite of Elizabethan playwrights such as shakespeare : "To sleep: | perchance | to dream: | ay, there's | the rub" (hamlet).
intermezzo (plural intermezzi)	a theatrical form of entertainment first produced in fifteenth-century Italy as an interlude between acts of a traditional drama. The

	performances were generally held at court and drew allegorical or mythological parallels to those being honored. The principle convention of intermezzi was lavish spectacle ; very little dialogue was used. Music, dance, and pantomime were employed to convey the story.
joruri	the narrative of a Japanese *bunraku* drama.
kabuki	a form of dramatic theater that emerged in early-seventeenth-century Japan that involves music, dance, and acrobatics; ornate costumes and makeup; extensive scenery; and spectacular tricks of stage technology.
kagura	a form of early Japanese dance drama that took shape in the third century b.c.e. These performances were comprised of ritual dances connected with Shintoism, an ancient Japanese religion devoted to the worship of gods and spirits representing aspects of the natural world.
katharsis	*see* catharsis.
komos	literally, "band of revelers" (Greek), the final song or procession in a Greek Old Comedy.
koryphaios	in Ancient Greece, the chorus leader who sang and danced an improvised story or hymn known as the dithyramb. In Greek tragedy, the *koryphaios* served as the leader of the chorus but could also actively engage with the other actors on stage.
kyogen	literally, "wild words" (Japanese), farcical sketches in noh drama that are performed between plays by the same actors playing the colloquial roles; also, a character in noh drama, often a servant or commoner, who speaks colloquially and acts as narrator.
THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: L	
Title	**Description**
laughing comedy	term championed by Oliver Goldsmith (1730-1774), who suggested that the popular sentimental comedies of eighteenth-century England were a lesser form of drama. Goldsmith endorsed a more traditional conception of comedy in his *Essay on the Theatre* by stating that "comedy should excite our laughter by ridiculously exhibiting the follies of the lower part of mankind." richard brinsley sheridan was one of the leading proponents of laughing comedy.
lazzi (singular *lazzo*)	comic bits of action and dialogue performed by stock characters in *commedia dell'arte* . These moments were most likely performed multiple times by the same actor in various performances, though they were intended to appear improvised.
leitmotif	the dominant recurrent element in an artistic work, generally tied to the theme or overall idea of the piece as a whole. The term also refers to the melodic passage or phrase in opera that is associated with a specific character, event, or symbol.
linear plot	a traditional plot sequence in which the incidents in the drama progress chronologically; that is, all of the events build upon one another and there are no jumps from the present to the past. The

	Greeks and neoclassicists adopted this structure as the template for creating effective tragedy. racine's *phaedra* has a linear plot.
Little Theater Movement	an early-twentieth-century movement in the United States that sought to emulate the European alternative theater movement to develop and support experimental and new work without the financial and creative constraints of the commercial theater. This model allowed artists to produce their work in smaller theaters across the country. Perhaps the most famous participants in the movement were eugene o'neill and susan glaspell , who developed their work with the Provincetown Players on Cape Cod and in New York.
liturgical drama	a form of medieval European drama that sprang from the elaboration of liturgy, or the act of public worship found in the Latin Mass. As early as 925 c.e. , antiphonal tropes , or musical passages that incorporated the imitation of religious figures in a call-and-response dialogue, served as interpolations in religious services. These tropes, credited as the first mimetic performances in the church, were initially part of Easter Mass, and then were added to services held on other holy days; they also became more dramaturgically complex over time. Typically, liturgical plays explore the mysteries and miracles depicted in the Bible and in the lives of saints.
loges	in seventeenth-century French theaters, the division of galleries that created boxes for audience members to sit.
low (physical) comedy	humorous plays that employ burlesque , horseplay, or the representation of unrefined life. (*See* high (verbal) comedy.)
Ludi Romani	a Roman religious festival, established in the sixth century b.c.e., that was given in honor of the god Jupiter. At its inception, Ludi Romani included various types of performances such as chariot races, prizefighting, dance, and farce; later, in the mid-third century b.c.e. , performances of comedies and tragedies were added to the festival.
THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: M	
Title	**Description**
mansions	scenic structures used in the performance of liturgical dramas and cycle plays during the Middle Ages. Because medieval dramas often followed the travels of a single protagonist over an extended period of time, mansions were arranged to represent the various locales and circumstances in his journey.
masque	an elaborate form of court entertainment commonly associated in England with the reigns of King James I (r. 1603-25) and Charles I (r. 1625-49). The performances sought to idealize the monarchy by drawing allegorical or mythological parallels, and masques incorporated lavish spectacle , music, dance, and pantomime to convey the story. ben jonson wrote a number of masques for the Stuart court, and his contemporary Inigo Jones (1573-1652) was the principal designer of these spectacles.

mattavaranis	in a traditional Indian playhouse, the downstage areas that flank the sides of the main performance space.
mechane	the crane used for special effects in fifth-century Greek performance that could lift actors in the air and propel them over the playing space. The device was commonly used in depicting the gods but it was also employed to simulate the flight of both animals and chariots.
melodrama	originally, a drama in which music is used to heighten emotion (the Greek *melos* means "song"). As it was popularized during the nineteenth century in France, Britain, and the United States, this genre grew to be characterized by stories of adventure and intrigue calculated to provoke audiences' heightened emotional response. Melodrama offers sensational plots (rather than subtle ideas or character development) in which good inevitably triumphs over evil. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* , George L. Aiken's 1852 stage adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, is a well-known melodrama.
metatheater	a term coined by the critic Lionel Abel in 1963 to describe the self-conscious dramatic examination of the nature of theater itself, primarily the relationship between reality and theatrical illusion. Conscious displays of theatricality and role-playing are two prominent conventions. luigi pirandello and jean genet are known for the use of metatheatrical techniques in their dramas.
metatragedy	a modern form of drama that reflects upon the nature of tragedy, the nature of role-playing, and the relationship between reality and theatrical illusion, often through the use of self-conscious, self-referential dramatic techniques. luigi pirandello's *six characters in search of an author* is a prominent example of metatragedy.
method acting	a system of acting derived from the stanislavsky technique and developed by Lee Strasberg in the United States beginning in the 1930s. Actors who employ "the method," as it is often called, attempt to embody the emotional life of the character by utilizing experiences from their own past to stimulate engaging, realistic performances.
Middle Comedy	a transitional form of ancient Greek comedy, sometimes said to fall between the works of aristophanes and those of Menander (ca. 342-291 b.c.e.), that focused more on contemporary life and manners than the political and social subject matter of Old Comedy represented by Aristophanes. The role of the chorus is also greatly reduced in this era.
mime	the narrative art of acting out situations and stories using gesture and expression without any dialogue; also, an actor who performs in this style. A form of Greek and Roman performance dating back to the fifth century b.c.e., mime was used to satirize everyday situations and burlesque traditional myths.
mimesis	the Greek word for imitation that is used to describe the artistic practice of representing reality (or creating theater). In the *Republic* , Plato argues that the mimetic arts are corruptive because they are too

	far removed from the truth. In the *Poetics* , on the other hand, Aristotle argues that tragedy is an imitation of an action in a way that is embellished and perfected.
minstrelsy	a theatrical entertainment that originated in early-nineteenth-century America where white artists would perform songs, skits, and comedic numbers in blackface (burnt cork with which actors darkened their faces). Deeply rooted in racial stereotypes, the performances caricatured slave culture. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, black artists began to appear as minstrels themselves, sometimes actually using blackface, as minstrel shows were one of the few vehicles in which African Americans could perform on stage professionally.
miracle plays	early medieval liturgical plays that demonstrated the miracles and martyrdom of saints by way of mixed narratives which often incorporated conflict and adventure.
mise-en-scène	literally "putting onto the stage" (French), the aesthetic arrangement of a stage picture including the set, properties, and positioning of actors.
modernism	a departure from artistic tradition that took place at the end of the nineteenth century and continued through the first half of the twentieth. Reflecting the social, technological, and philosophical changes that distinguished the modern world from earlier ages, modernism featured radical experimentation in drama, literature, and the arts. Modernist authors and artists include T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), Franz Kafka (1883-1924), Virginia Woolf (1882-1941), Pablo Picasso (1881-1973), and Igor Stravinsky (1882-1971). bertolt brecht , luigi pirandello , and samuel beckett are examples of modernist playwrights; Antonin Artaud's dramatic theories are modernist as well.
monologue	a long speech or narrative spoken by one character. A monologue can be addressed to another character on stage, spoken to oneself, or shared with the audience as a means of elucidating internal thoughts or desires that cannot be expressed in formal dialogue. A soliloquy is a form of monologue, and an aside , if lengthy, can be characterized as a monologue.
mood	the atmosphere or emotional state of a play's setting or context.
morality plays	a secular form of medieval drama that was popular between 1400 and 1550, predominantly in England and France. Didactic in tone and allegorical in structure, morality plays dealt with the individual's moral life, the battle between figures representing good and evil, and the journey to salvation. *everyman* is an example of a morality play, and christopher marlowe's *doctor faustus* shows the influence of the morality tradition on later drama.
motif	a recurrent element in an artistic work that is generally tied to the themes or overall idea of the piece as a whole. (*See* leitmotif.)
motivation	the thought or desire that drives a character to actively pursue a want

	or need, which in acting theory is called the *objective* . A character generally has an overall objective or long-term goal in a drama but may change his or her objective, and hence motivation, from scene to scene when confronted with various obstacles.
musical	a play with musical numbers interspersed throughout. At the start of the twentieth century, musicals were largely revue shows featuring beautiful girls, lavish costumes, sets , and spectacle. *Show Boat* (1927), by Jerome Kern (1885-1945) and Oscar Hammerstein II (1895-1960), is often credited as one of the first cohesive works of musical theater. The contemporary American musical which tells a cohesive story through the integration of dialogue, dance, and song began to take shape in the 1940s and is most famously embodied in the work of Richard Rodgers (1902-1979) and Oscar Hammerstein, who together created *Oklahoma!* (1943) and *The Sound of Music* (1959), among many other musicals.
mystery cycles	*see* cycle plays.
THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: N O	
Title	**Description**
nanxi	a form of drama that emerged in the southern provinces of China during the fourteenth century and has proven more influential to the modern Chinese stage than the classical *zaju* plays. A number of stock character types originated in early performances. *Nanxi* plays can contain a variable number of acts with multiple songs that draw upon regional folk music.
nataka plays	a classical form of Indian theater that dramatizes the plight of exalted heroes or royalty in well-known mythological or historical stories. *Nataka* plays are comprised of five to ten *arikas* , or acts, and contain a number of elements such as superhuman powers, love-affairs, and the conscious employment of *rasas* , or specific emotional stimuli and audience response. The theorist Bharata prescribes the elements of Nataka plays further in the *Natyasastra* , written sometime between 300 b.c.e. and 200 c.e.
naturalism	a literary and theatrical movement that thrived in the late nineteenth century. Naturalist writers sought to depict life truthfully, objectively, and with scientific accuracy. Emile Zola notes in his *Naturalism in the Theatre* (1881) that "the physiological man of our modern works insists more and more imperiously on being determined by the setting and environment of which he is a product." In naturalism, the physiological disposition of a character is the focus of the drama, and heredity or physical environment dictates his or her fate. The concept of naturalism can also be applied to the way in which a play is staged. For example, a naturalist set may incorporate a real working fireplace or a faucet with running water. august strindberg described his play *miss julie* as a naturalistic tragedy.

neoclassicism	a seventeenth-century movement, prompted by a renewed interest in the writings of Aristotle and other classical theorists, that lasted well into the eighteenth century. Neoclassical theory emphasizes three principles of tragedy. The first and most important is *verisimilitude* , defined as the quality or appearance of truth. The second principle emphasizes *decorum* , or the proper way in which characters should act on stage as dictated by their disposition and social standing. The last principle of neoclassicism is adherence to the "three unities " of action, time, and place as derived from a strict interpretation of Aristotle's emphasis in his *Poetics* on the importance of a singular action depicted in a plot confined to one revolution of the sun.
nepathya	the area in a sanskrit playhouse that includes the backstage area and dressing rooms.
New Comedy	a form of Greek comedy written during the Hellenistic period (336-31 b.c.e.) that focused on domestic issues such as love and familial relationships rather than political satire. In structure, New Comedies include a prologue, followed by a series of episodes and choral passages. Other characteristics of the genre include the frequent use of stock characters , disguise, and mistaken assumptions. The most celebrated writer of New Comedy is Menander (342-291 b.c.e.).
noh drama	a form of Japanese theater developed by Kannami Kiyotsugu (1333-1384), head of one of the country's *sarugaku noh* troupes, and his son ZEAMI MOTOKIYO (1363-1443) . (The term *noh* means "skill" or "craft.") The stories of noh plays are drawn from mythology, legend, and history and are typically structured in two acts. The central character speaks in an elevated, highly literary verse. Other established roles include: the main character's companion (*tsure*); a third party (*waki*), frequently a priest, who encounters the main character in the first act; and a servant or commoner (*kyogen*) who speaks colloquially. An onstage chorus sings many of the characters' lines and narrates events within the dramatic action, while three or four onstage musicians accompany the play with flute and drums. The climax of a noh play takes the form of a ritualized dance. Noh drama falls into five categories: plays about gods; warrior plays; plays about women, or "wig plays"; miscellaneous plays, including plays about madness and plays about the present time; and demon plays, in which the main character is a good or evil supernatural being.
Old Comedy	a form of Greek comedy most likely produced during the fifth century b.c.e. The plays of aristophanes are the only surviving examples of the genre and it is unclear whether or not his work resembled that of his contemporaries. Aristophanic Old Comedies often revolve around a theme or problem in everyday Athenian life; in style, the plays present far-fetched or farcical situations, and they incorporate bawdy jokes and songs. In structure, Old Comedies are similar to classical Greek

	tragedy: first a choral entrance or *parados* , then the *parabasis* or presentation of an idea followed by an *agon* or debate, and finally a series of episodes that culminate in a scene called the *komos* , where the problem is resolved and the characters exit in happy revelry.
opera	a play set to music where the dialogue is sung rather than spoken. The origins of opera date back to sixteenth-century Renaissance Italy, where a renewed interest in Greek music and its relationship to drama prompted the creation of dramatic work that was recited or chanted to musical accompaniment.
orchestra	literally, "dancing place" (Greek), the semi-circular playing space in a classical Greek theater where the chorus and actors would perform.
THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: P	
Title	**Description**
pantomime	both a form of silent acting that relies heavily on gesture, facial expression, and dance, and also, in England, beginning in the eighteenth century, a form of elaborate production, usually staged at Christmas, that includes ballet, music, and characters derived from the *commedia dell'arte* tradition.
parabasis	literally, "digression" (Greek), in Old Comedy a section of a play in which the chorus introduces the major problem of the play and a line of action to solve it, or directly addresses the audience with an elaborate plea to win approval for the playwright.
parados	at the start of Greek drama, the entrance of the chorus that provides exposition and sets the mood. The *parados* often follows the prologue and is one of several structural elements of Greek tragedy in the fifth century b.c.e. In Old Comedy , the *parados* sets the grounds for the *agon* or debate that follows.
parody	an imitative form of comedy that spoofs or mimics the structure or content of another artistic work.
parterre	in seventeenth-century French theaters, the pit for standing spectators that was positioned directly in front of the raised proscenium stage.
pastiche	a dramatic, musical, or artistic work that openly imitates or borrows from the style of another. Often, the work is intended to satirize or pay homage to its source of inspiration. *Pastiche* can also refer to a hodgepodge of elements drawn from different sources.
pastoral drama	a form of drama developed and popularized during the Italian Renaissance that sought to imitate the idyllic pastoral (rural) settings of Greek mythology. Perhaps influenced by the Greek satyr plays, pastoral dramas incorporate mythic elements in their depictions of the travails of young lovers, typically shepherds.
performance art	a form of individual or collective performance that began taking shape in the United States in the 1970s and '80s to explore abstract ideas through the instrument of the performer's body. Formal theatrical settings and accoutrements are discarded in favor of a focus on the

	body in its movement and form.
peripeteia	in a tragic plot, the moment in which the story's action undergoes a lasting reversal, or change in direction. Aristotle notes in the *Poetics* that the best reversals are those that transpire organically according to the logic of the action.
perspective scenery	a scenic convention first used in Italy at the beginning of the sixteenth century whereby the scenery on stage was painted and placed strategically to create the illusion of depth for the spectator. Generally, scenic wings were aligned at sharp angles on either side of the stage and a backdrop was draped at the rear of the stage. The floor of the stage was raked upward and the wings closest to the audience were elaborately decorated. The actors primarily performed downstage , so as not to disrupt the illusion.
pièce bien-fait	*see* well-made-play.
platea	in medieval performance, a neutral acting area in the church where liturgical dramas were performed. *Sedes* (or " mansions ") were localized acting sites within this space.
playwright	an individual who writes plays for the theater. The first playwrights penned dramas for the Greek religious festival, the city Dionysia , and performed in their own works.
plot	the arrangement of related incidents in a play. Plots may be simple or complex, and any single play may have more than one plot (and plays from experimental, avant-garde , or postmodern traditions may calculatedly eschew plot altogether). Among the key terms associated with plot, and useful in describing and analyzing any play's plot, are *antagonist* , *conflict* , *climax* , *dénouement* , *falling action* , *motivation* , *point of attack* , *protagonist* , *resolution* , and *rising action* . Plots typically begin with a triggering moment or point of attack that propels a character's motivations or needs into action. The hero or protagonist (not necessarily an individual) is prompted to make decisions that move the story forward. The conflict or antagonistic elements in a plot create obstacles and the negotiation of these obstacles becomes the rising incidents intended to create dramatic tension and keep the reader or spectator interested in the story's progression. The climax is the most suspenseful point in the plot and is reached when the conflict comes to a head, initiating the resolution or dénouement.
point of attack	the triggering event or defining conflict that propels the action of the play and pushes the plot into motion. (*See* plot .)
poor theater	a term used to describe Polish director Jerzy Grotowski's (1933-1999) theoretical approach to creating theater. Grotowski's works were premised on the idea that theater should be stripped to its essence, focusing on the exchange of ideas from actor to audience. Without the use of traditional sets , sound effects, music, or costumes, Grotowski

	created highly theatrical and thought-provoking productions that relied primarily on the dedication and stamina of his ensemble of actors.
popular entertainment	a term used to describe any theatrical performance that attracts a large audience or has commercial appeal. Musical revues, pageants, and burlesque performances are modern forms of popular entertainment.
postcolonialism	a critical standpoint or theoretical approach to examining literature, theater, and other art forms in the context of European colonialism and its aftermath. Postcolonial analysis examines relationships between native and colonial traditions; explores the influence of imperial ideologies, power structures, and discourses on contemporary perceptions and relations; and looks for new forms of identity and cultural resistance that arise in postcolonial societies. Postcolonial writers grapple with the fusion of native traditions and those of the colonial traditions in which many of them were educated. Playwrights wole soyinka (b. 1934), derek wolcott (b. 1930), and athol fugard (b. 1932) address postcolonial issues in their work.
postmodernism	a movement that emerged in the 1960s in reaction against many of the cultural and aesthetic assumptions of modernism. While modernists often sought a clear, cohesive artistic construction, for example, postmodern artists sought to embrace inconsistencies in style and to collapse literary boundaries. Pastiche is a predominant element in postmodern works of art.
prakarana play	a classical form of Indian theater that relies on invented stories and depicts less exalted characters than those in *nataka* plays. Like *nataka* plays, *prakarana* plays must be comprised of five to ten *arikas* , or acts, and follow a prescriptive set of rules regarding structure and staging. The theorist Bharata describes the elements of *prakarana* plays further in the *Natyasastra* , written sometime between 300 b.c.e. and 200 c.e.
prekshagriha	as described in Bharata's *Natyasastra* , the area devoted to seating an audience in the interior of a rectangular sanskrit Playhouse.
presentational theater	a highly theatrical type of performance in which the performers are aware of the audience's presence. In presentational theater, the fourth wall can be broken and lines can be delivered directly to the spectators.
problem play	a late-nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century form of drama that addressed social issues. The early dramas of henrik ibsen and george bernard shaw are examples of problem plays.
prologue	in some plays, the opening scene in which information is revealed about events that occurred prior to the play's start. Historically, the prologue has also been used to praise the playwright or entreat the good will of the audience.
properties, props	any objects used on stage by actors, for example, a pair of scissors or a

	hairbrush. Items that are small enough to hold are often referred to as *hand props* . Pictures and decorative set items are also considered props. Costume pieces and items rooted to the set or playing space itself are not props.
proscenium arch	an arch over the front of a stage; thus, a *proscenium theater* is comprised of a raised stage framed by a proscenium arch with the audience seated facing the stage, observing the action as if through a picture frame. This kind of stage is characteristic of European theaters built from the late sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries (for example, the *Teatro Farnese* in Parma was completed in 1628).
protagonist	the hero or central character in a play. Derived from the ancient Greek term *protagonistes* , meaning "leading actor." In traditional drama, the protagonist often engages in conflicts with an antagonist.
pulpitum	in a Roman theater, the raised stage in front of the scene building.
THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: Q R	
Title	**Description**
quarto	a form of publication typically used in England at the close of the sixteenth century where pages were created by folding paper in fours. Plays of the era, such as those of shakespeare , were generally published in inexpensive quarto editions. (*See* folio.)
raked stage	a stage that slopes upward so that it is elevated at the back (upstage) and lower in the front. During the Italian Renaissance, perspective scenery relied on raked stages to reinforce the perception of depth. The actors primarily performed downstage.
ranga	the performance area in a sanskrit playhouse.
rangapitha	the main performance area consisting of the most prominent performance space on the stage in a sanskrit playhouse.
rangashirsha	in a sanskrit performance, the retiring room, or green room area upstage that stretches across the width of the back wall and is fronted by the performance space; there is generally an ornamental curtain with two openings for entrances and exits that separates the *rangashirsha* from the playing area.
rasas	in sanskrit drama, the cumulative stimuli and aesthetic reactions of spectators that are formed when paired with *bhavas* (emotions). There are nine basic *rasas* : erotic, comic, pathetic, furious, heroic, terrible, odious, marvelous, and peaceful. A play can incorporate many *rasas* but at its conclusion, one *rasa* must predominate to ensure a sense of balance and closure for the spectator.
realism	a literary and theatrical style that seeks to depict life as it really is without conventional artifice. The origins of realism can be traced to nineteenth-century Europe when playwrights and theater practitioners sought to move away from traditional, often melodramatic, plays and productions to create drama that appeared to that era to portray real people confronted with plausible situations. An interest in realistic

	staging prompted the concept of the fourth wall , a theatrical term that involves the use of a three-dimensional playing area where the actors' performance is focused entirely on the world of the play and the audience is a silent, unseen observer. henrik ibsen wrote realistic plays, as did anton chekhov , george bernard shaw , and susan glaspell .
repertory	a set of plays. A repertory acting company will perform a series of plays in rotation, alternating productions in a given theatrical space during a specific period of time.
resolution	the final event that resolves the fundamental conflict that had sustained the play's main action. A resolution can also be a *dénouement* .
Restoration	the theatrical period (1660-1700) marked by the return of Charles II to the throne of England after the Commonwealth period. Restoration drama was written for and represented the new aristocracy, which repudiated the moral strictures of Puritanism. Restoration plays, particularly the comedies, often feature bawdy and licentious humor and situations . *the country wife* by william wycherley and *the rover* by aphra behn are Restoration comedies.
revenge tragedy	a form of sensational tragedy revolving around stories of murder and revenge. Characteristics of revenge tragedy include soliloquies , plays within a play, and sensationalistic, even supernatural, plot twists. The Roman playwright seneca is considered the primary influence for the genre, which flourished in England during the reigns of Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603) and James I (r. 1603-25). thomas kyd's *the spanish tragedy* and shakespeare's *hamlet* are among the best-known revenge tragedies.
rhapsode	in ancient Greece, a storyteller who recited mythological tales and epic poems such as Homer's *Odyssey* and *Iliad* to an audience. *Rhapsodes* performed at religious festivals prior to the advent of traditional drama, which emerged sometime in the late sixth century B.C.E..
rising action	the portion of a play's structure, usually near the beginning, in which events complicate the situation that existed at the beginning of a play, intensifying the conflict or introducing new conflict.
romance play	a term used primarily to describe shakespeare's later plays that mix the comic with the tragic. A romance play's action moves between pastoral and court or city settings and often incorporates magical elements. The reuniting of long-separated family members is also a common motif. Shakespeare's romance plays include: *Cymbeline* , *Pericles* , *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale* .
Romanticism	a literary and artistic movement that began in England and Germany around 1800 and emphasized imagination and emotion over the neoclassical ideals of intellect and reason. Largely influenced by the

	philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), Romantic literature generally reflects a belief in the innate goodness of man in his natural state. Though there are many tenets of the movement, the fundamental interest of Romanticists was to explore the idea of truth as viewed in relation to the world and natural phenomena. Romanticists cultivated emotion and sensation, free thought and mysticism, and revolt against authority. Romantic works also reflect an interest in the melancholy state of man and his capacity for cruelty. In Germany, Romanticism was influenced by the philosophies of Immanuel Kant (1742-1804) and evolved from the *Sturm und Drang* (storm and stress) movement associated with the early works of Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) and johann wolfgang von goethe .
round characters	complex characters, often major characters, who can grow and change and "surprise convincingly"--that is, act in a way that the audience does not expect from what had gone on before but now accepts as possible, even probable, and "realistic." (*See* flat characters.)
THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: S	
Title	**Description**
sarugaku	literally, "monkey entertainment" (Japanese), a form of variety theater containing comic dialogues and short skits that were performed at Buddhist temples. By the thirteenth century, *sarugaku* become increasingly sophisticated and was thereafter known by the name *sarugaku noh* . (The term *noh* means "skill" or "craft.")
sarugaku noh	*see sarugaku*.
Sanskrit theater	a classical form of Indian theater that dates back to approximately 100 c.e. The purpose of Sanskrit theater is to move the spectator to experience the appropriate *rasa* or sense of pleasure and delight. shudraka's *the little clay cart* is a Sanskrit play. (Sanskrit is the classical language of ancient India.)
satire	a form of comedy that relies on wit and irony to offer social commentary through imitation and ridicule of its subject.
satyr play	in ancient Greece, a comedic burlesque or short satirical play that often accompanied a tragedy at the city Dionysia. In form, the plays were composed of episodes followed by choral odes and also incorporated dance. Unlike tragedies, these plays used colloquial language, lewd dialogue and gesture, and parodies of familiar myths and stories.
scene	traditional segmentation of a play's structure to indicate a change in time or location, to jump from one subplot to another, or to introduce new characters or rearrange the actors on the stage. Traditionally plays are composed of acts , which are then broken down into scenes. In the French tradition as practiced by molière and racine , a new scene begins whenever a character enters or exits the stage.
scène à faire	literally, "scene that must be done" (French), the obligatory scene that

	resolves the end of a well-made play.
scenery	the physical representation of the play's setting (location and time period) in a production that also serves to emphasize the aesthetic concept or atmosphere of the play. Scenery can be painted drops or flats, projections, a built environment, or even a natural environment.
sedes	literally, "mansions" (Latin), localized acting sites within the acting area of a church. (*See platea* .)
sentimental comedy	a genre of comedy popularized in eighteenth-century England that departed from the bawdy and titillating themes of the Restoration (1640-1700) and emphasized instead the simple and innate goodness of humankind. Interest in the theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and other philosophers fueled the assumption that people could be saved from vice if instructed to follow their natural instincts. Topics such as the social order, moral elevation, and appropriate sexual behavior were often the focus of these plays. Like domestic tragedy , sentimental comedy often centered on and appealed to the middle class.
set	the design, decoration, and scenery of the stage during a play, usually meant to represent the location(s) in the drama.
setting	the time and location in which a play takes place. A play can have multiple settings and incorporate more than one time period as well.
skene	the wooden scene house that stood behind the *orchestra* in a classical Greek theater. The *skene* is thought to have had one or more doors where actors and chorus members could enter and exit the playing space and make costume changes, and an upper level or roof where gods and other characters could appear. On either side of the structure were passageways where the chorus could also enter and exit. The front area of the *skene* was later described by historians as the *paraskenion* . *Skene* is the origin of the English word "scene."
slapstick	originally, a wooden sword worn by the *commedia dell'arte* character Harlequin which figured prominently in his comedic routine. As a subgenre, slapstick is a form of physical comedy often characterized by farcical situations, crude jokes, and reckless behavior.
soliloquy	a monologue uttered by a character alone onstage that provides insight into his or her thoughts. The theatrical convention is common in plays from the Renaissance through the eighteenth century and is generally associated with shakespeare's works. The device was discarded by modern dramatists, such as august strindberg , concerned with creating realistic depictions on stage.
sound effect	a sound recorded or created for a theatrical piece to enhance the aural dimension of the world of the play.
spectacle	generally, the element(s) in a play's production that appeal to the visual theatricality of the piece, such as costumes, scenery , or stage tricks. Described in Aristotle's *Poetics* as the sixth element of tragedy

	(after plot , character , thought, diction, and song). Spectacle can also be defined as the aspects of performance not inherent to the written text, including all of the properties that create atmosphere or offer visual stimulation. In modern usage, the term often implies elaborate or costly stage effects.
stage business	physical activities or gestures adapted by performers to enhance their level of characterization and help elucidate a play's subtext. Stage business is generally not included in the playwright's text but is determined by the actor and/or director during the rehearsal process.
stage directions	in the text of a play, directions or actions indicated by the playwright that describe the physical movements or emotional responses of the characters on stage. Stage directions may also note the setting , the physical appearance of the characters, and their relationships with one another. In a printed play, stage directions are normally italicized and enclosed in brackets so they can readily be distinguished from dialogue. eugene o'neill is famous for his lengthy and detailed stage directions.
Stanislavsky Method	an approach to realistic acting created by Russian actor and director Konstantin Stanislavsky (1863-1938) that involves the study of emotional and psychological responses and their expression through physical and vocal technique. Stanislavsy's teaching methodology and the vocabulary that characterizes it exerted a profound influence on twentieth- and twenty-first-century acting and script analysis, especially in the United States.
stasima	choral dance songs that separate a series of episodes in a Greek tragedy.
stock character	a recognizable character type that can be found in many plays. Comedies have traditionally relied on such stock characters as the braggart soldier, the miserly father, the beautiful ingénue, or the trickster servant. *Commedia dell'arte* and the *Atellan farce* relied entirely on the peculiarities of stock characters to provide inspiration for creating scenarios.
Sturm und Drang movement	literally, "storm and stress" (German), a movement in theatrical writing that took place in Germany between the late 1760s and the mid-1780s. Proponents of the movement rebelled against neoclassical dictums and eighteenth-century rationalism with a drama that emphasized passion, inspiration, and individualism.
subplot	a secondary plot that usually shares a relationship with the main plot, either thematically or incidentally. The subplot often deals with the secondary characters in the play. (*See* Romanticism.)
subtext	Konstantin stanislavsky 's term for unspoken text; for an actor, the internal motivations or responses never explicitly stated in the dialogue, but understood either by the audience or the characters themselves. The dramatist creates subtext to underscore the emotional

	or intellectual truth of a character's life that is unspoken but implied.
surrealism	an artistic movement popularized in the 1920s and embraced through the late 1930s, primarily in painting and the fine arts. Spearheaded by Andre Breton (1896-1966) in his 1924 manifesto, the tenets of surrealism were greatly influenced by Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) theory of the unconscious, in which everyday logic is rejected for the irrational mingling of symbols and desires. The manipulation of these patterns offered artists such as Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) and Jean Cocteau (1889-1963) a forum for highly theatrical work that emphasized mythic traditions and their relationship to everyday experience.
symbol	something that represents or suggests something else through association, resemblance, or convention. For example, in many cultures the color black symbolizes death and mourning, while in certain literary traditions the moon symbolizes purity and chastity.
symbolism	generally, the use of symbols; more specifically, an artistic movement, typically associated with late-nineteenth-century French poets such as Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891), Charles Baudelaire (1821-1876), and Stéphane Mallarmé (1862-1949), that began as a revolt against the predominant realistic style of European literature. In drama, this break from realism applied to both the dramaturgical aspects of symbolist plays and the way in which they were staged. In form and content, symbolist playwrights strayed from the conventions of popular domestic dramas and sought to represent a sense of truth that stretched beyond the recognizable or scientific world. The use of symbols or metaphors--inherently tied to visceral response and to stories that defy time or cultural milieu--was intended to express deeper states of human consciousness. This was demonstrated through staging techniques that emphasized mood and atmosphere over narrative. Playwright Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949) is a prominent representative of this movement.
THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: T	
Title	**Description**
tableau (plural tableaux)	a motionless dramatic scene created by actors to depict the appearance of a moment frozen in time. In nineteenth-century drama, tableaux were often used at the end of acts to highlight dramatic relationships and climactic action.
teichoskopeia	literally, "watching from the wall" (Greek), a stage device in classical Greek theater where characters would stand on the roof of the *skene* and describe battles and other scenes happening on the other side of the wall.
theater in the round	*see* arena.
theme	the abstract message or concept that a playwright wishes to convey by uniting the dramaturgical construction of the play with specific motifs

	, actions, and images.
thespian	a word meaning "actor," derived from the name of the Greek tragedian Thespis who was the first to craft a character apart from the chorus in his tragedies. For this reason he is also credited as the "father of Greek tragedy."
thrust stage	a stage that juts out into the audience so that the seats are arranged on three sides of this extended playing space; this type of stage offers a variety of viewing angles for the audience.
thymele	in a classical Greek theater, the raised stone placed in the middle of the *orchestra* which was used as an altar or table in performance.
Tom show	after the success of George L. Aiken's 1852 stage adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* , numerous attempts to imitate or burlesque the story were made. Many of these entertainments, now referred to as Tom shows, relied on racial stereotypes and missed the moral and social objectives of the original novel.
tragedy	a form of drama that arose in ancient Greek culture, though its specific origins are still debated. The term *tragoidia* , from which the word *tragedy* evolved, refers to the ritualistic practice of dancing for the prize of a goat, or slaying a goat in honor of the gods. Tragedy may have grown out of a ritualistic practice to honor the god Dionysus. Some scholars believe that tragedy evolved from the dithyramb , an improvised choral ode with a traditional refrain. Though the mode and structure of tragedy has varied over the centuries to reflect the cultural beliefs and conventions of each age, the central dramatic conflict remains constant: the human being struggles to overcome some antagonistic force and is ultimately defeated. In classical Greek tragedy, the protagonist is a man of stature who must negotiate choice and his relationship with the gods for the good of his people, as in sophocles' *oedipus the king* . In modernist drama, tragedies often reflect the struggle of the middle class to overcome societal restraints or domestic conflict, as reflected in the work of henrik ibsen and later arthur miller.
tragicomedy	the term used to describe a drama that incorporates both tragic and comedic elements. This hybrid form was popularized in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in such works as Giovanni Battista Guarini's pastoral play *The Faithful Shepherd* (1590) and the dramatic collaborations of Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579-1625). Plays written in this mode often featured tragic conflicts that resolve happily through unexpected--sometimes improbable-- plot twists. The term *tragicomedy* has also been applied to modern and contemporary plays that do not fit the traditional categories of tragedy and comedy . samuel becket's *waiting for godot* , for example, is subtitled "a tragicomedy in two acts."

tragoidia	literally, "goat song," the Greek word for tragedy ; the word was originally associated with the ritualistic practice of dancing for the prize of a goat, or slaying a goat in honor of the gods.
trope	a musical passage that serves as an interpolation in a Christian religious service and elaborates on the liturgy. Tropes included the representation of religious figures in a call-and-response structure and became a traditional part of the Easter Mass during the Middle Ages. They are commonly cited as the first examples of mimetic performance within the church.

THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF DRAMA: U V W X Y Z

Title	Description
unities	the principles of structure, derived from Aristotle's *Poetics* , that require a plot 's action to be singular, to complete itself within a twenty-four hour period, and to take place in one location. During the sixteenth century, a rigid neoclassical interpretation of Aristotle's writings emphasized these "three unities" of action, time, and place.
upstage	the area of the stage farthest from the audience.
venationes	a form of Roman entertainment popularized at the Colosseum in approximately 80 c.e. that involved elaborate contests to the death between animals or between men and animals.
Verfremdungseffekt	*See* estrangement effect.
verisimilitude	a central tenet of neoclassicism , defined as the quality or appearance of truth. According to the doctrine of verisimilitude, characters and events on stage must be believable; in other words, they must not tax the spectator's credulity by venturing into the fantastic or improbable.
Weimar classicism	a German artistic movement spearheaded by johann wolfgang von goethe and Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805) that sought to revive drama by returning to Greek themes and forms.
well-made play	also called *pièce bien-fait* (French), a play that relies heavily on the orchestration of highly complicated plots rather than characterization or themes. The genre dominated French theater for much of the nineteenth century; its playwrights sought to integrate conventions such as overheard conversations, mistaken identities, sudden appearances and disappearances, and other forms of confusion to create suspense and intrigue. The plays conclude with a *scène à faire* or the final confrontation of characters that resolves the play's action. Eugene Scribe (1791-1861) and Victorien Sardou (1831-1908) are the two playwrights chiefly associated with the genre.
wings	traditionally associated with the proscenium theater, the narrow areas off both sides of the stage, where actors wait before making an entrance into the playing space. A curtain or piece of scenery often conceals the wings. *Wings* can also refer to scenery placed on the sides of a stage.
yavanika	in sanskrit theater, a curtain used to hide musicians from the

	audience's view.
yugen	an aesthetic concept underlying Japanese noh performance that suggests beauty, grace, and an awareness of life's impermanence.
zaju	a form of drama popularized and performed in the Northern provinces of China during the Yuan Dynasty (1234-1368), considered by the Chinese as "classical" drama for its poeticism and literary merit. Earlier *zaju* entertainments of the Song Dynasty (960-1279) were primarily composed of satirical sketches and acrobatic performances. quan hanqing's *snow in midsummer* is an example of a *zaju* play.
zanni	the servant characters in *commedia dell'arte* which include Arlecchino (or Harlequin), Brighella, and Pulcinello.